



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 159

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2013

No. 161

## Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Spirit of God, descend on our hearts, for apart from You life is a tale full of sound and fury signifying nothing.

May our Senators walk in Your ways, keeping Your precepts with such integrity that they will never be ashamed. Lord, incline their hearts to Your wisdom, providing them with the understanding they need to accomplish Your purposes in our world. Let Your mercy protect them from the dangers of this life, as they learn to find delight in Your commandments. Keep them ever mindful of the fewness of their days and the greatness of their work.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### THANKING THE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before the esteemed senior Senator from Vermont leaves the floor, I want to say a few words.

I appreciate the guidance and leadership my friend has given over these many years in leading the Judiciary Committee. It is a committee where most all of the legislation is funneled,

and what we have focused on in recent months is the problem we have with judges.

Yesterday my friend did a remarkably good job in leading a precedent indicating the issues we have with the DC Circuit, and I so appreciate his leadership on this issue and all the other issues on which the Judiciary Committee works. It is too bad we cannot have the Judiciary Committee as it was in our earlier years in the Senate where the productivity of that committee is not thwarted by not being able to bring items to the floor.

The Judiciary Committee has a wide range of jurisdiction over matters that are so important to our country, such as our national security agencies and cyber security. There is a multitude of issues the Judiciary Committee deals with, and I wish we could be doing more legislation on the floor which comes from that committee.

I wanted to extend my appreciation to the Senator for the good work he has done, and I also want to send accolades to the people of Vermont for having this good man leading the Senate in many different ways, not the least of which is being the Senate President pro tempore.

### DRUG SAFETY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the symptoms of fungal meningitis can be very subtle at first: headaches, fever, even light can start bothering people, as well as neckaches and backaches. The disease can also cause strokes, seizures, and even coma.

Fungal meningitis led to the death of at least 64 unfortunate Americans when they were injected with a contaminated medicine. The medicine—a steroid injection used to heal back pain—was tainted by unsanitary conditions from a facility that was masquerading as a compounding pharmacy in Massachusetts. The true compounding pharmacies provide cus-

tom-made medications for patients with unique health needs that cannot be treated by off-the-shelf prescription medicines. This practice is essential and can be critical for children, cancer patients, and people with severe allergies.

The contaminated medicine mixed at the New England Compounding Center was sent to scores of medical facilities in 23 different States and given to 14,000 patients. As I have indicated, 64 of them died and hundreds of those patients were seriously ill.

Recently a heart medication mixed at the same pharmacy was linked to the death of two young Nevada boys, ages 4 and 6, according to a lawsuit filed by their parents.

The New England Compounding Center was skirting Federal regulations and manufacturing large batches of drugs for mass distribution in very unsanitary conditions. By avoiding the safety inspections required of large-scale drug manufacturers, companies such as this one can boost profits, but in the process they risk lives.

The legislation on the floor will end that dangerous practice and ensure that patients have access to high-quality custom medications. This is not a contentious issue. On the contrary, this legislation has wide bipartisan support—led by HARKIN and ALEXANDER—and would pass by a wide margin in mere moments if not for the stall tactics by a few Republican Senators. This bill has already been delayed for more than a month because of these tactics, and Republicans continue to insist on running out the clock on this matter.

As everyone knows, if all time is required on the procedural issues, we will not be able to finish the bill until this Sunday—that includes working Saturday—and the final 30 hours won't run out until sometime on Sunday. It is time to dispense with this non-controversial measure—a measure that will safeguard the lives of vulnerable

● This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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